



SAMPLE PREVENTION & DIVERSION ASSESSMENT TOOL

**Includes questions adapted from Hennepin County and Columbus YWCA assessment tools*

This assessment tool, based on Minneapolis/Hennepin County, Minnesota's and Columbus, Ohio's assessment forms, will be of use to communities attempting to determine if a household needs prevention or diversion assistance. This should be administered as soon as a household enters an assessment center to determine if they will need shelter or if they can be assisted and housed without having to enter the homeless assistance system. The prevention segment of this tool should be tweaked based on the community's data on its sheltered population. Prevention assistance should be targeted to those households that most closely resemble the households already in shelter. For more information on prevention targeting, please see the Alliance's paper, [Prevention Targeting 101](#). For more on what shelter diversion is and what the benefits of it are, please read [Closing the Front Door: Creating a Successful Diversion Program for Homeless Families](#).

Instructions for the person administering the tool are in red.

Start by gathering required data to begin HMIS entry and creating an identifier for the household/household members.

Introductory Questions

1. Are you homeless (living on the street, staying in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program, fleeing domestic violence) or at-risk of homelessness?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If the household is not homeless or at-risk, refer to other mainstream resources.

2. Where did you stay last night?

☐ With a friend/family member/other doubled up situation

Skip to Diversion Questions.

☐ A hospital

☐ Jail/prison

☐ Juvenile detention facility

☐ In a hotel/motel

☐ In a foster care/group home

☐ In a substance abuse treatment facility

☐ In my own housing – rental

Skip to Prevention Questions.

☐ In my own housing – owned

Refer household to foreclosure prevention resources if necessary.

☐ In a car, on the street, or in another place not meant for human habitation

☐ In other housing _____

Ask household to define “other housing.”

3. What brought on your housing crisis?

☐ Problems with landlord

If yes, ask what specific issues are. Interpersonal? Disputes about the unit? Problems being caused by the tenant? Not paying rent? Make a note of the answer. Use this answer to determine what kind of mediation or conflict resolution is necessary.

☐ Have rental or utility arrears (circle which)

If yes, list amount owed: \$_____

☐ Evicted or in the process of being evicted from a private dwelling or housing provided by family or friends

☐ Victim of foreclosure on rental property

If yes, skip to Diversion Questions.

☐ Living in housing that has been condemned

If yes, skip to Diversion Questions.

☐ Unable to pay rent

☐ Experiencing high overcrowding

If yes, determine extent of overcrowding in the unit. If situation seems untenable, skip to Diversion Questions.

☐ Violence or abuse occurring in the family’s household

If the household is in immediate danger, refer them to law enforcement and/or the appropriate domestic violence provider.

☐ Other _____

Ask household describe “other.”

Diversion Questions

4. Are you safe in your current living situation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, but household is otherwise eligible for diversion, divert them to a location other than where they are currently staying and make sure that it is somewhere where the household feels safe.

5. Is there anyone else you and your family could stay with for at least the next three (3) to seven (7) days if you were able to receive case management services/transportation assistance/limited financial support?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Help family think through potential places – with family, friends, co-workers. Have them identify what barriers they think exist to staying in a certain location and how they might be overcome.

If answer to this question is yes, household qualifies for diversion assistance. Skip to Concluding Questions.

If answer to this question is no and shelter diversion has therefore been ruled out, go to Prevention Questions.

Prevention Questions

6. Are you safe in your current living situation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, admit or refer to emergency shelter.

7. Do you believe you will become homeless within the next seven (7) days?

☐ Yes ☐ No

At the bottom of this sheet, add one (1) point/tally mark if answer is yes.

8. Have you ever been to a shelter or another homeless assistance program before?

☐ Yes ☐ No

At the bottom of this sheet, add one (1) point/tally mark if answer is yes.

9. If you answered yes to the previous question, what was the name of the program?

When were you last there? ____/____/____

10. Household income is at or below 30 percent of AMI

☐ Yes ☐ No

If the community has data on sheltered households, they should adjust the percentage accordingly. At the bottom of this sheet, add one (1) point/tally mark if answer is yes.

11. Has household experienced homelessness in the last 12 months?

☐ Yes ☐ No

At the bottom of this sheet, add one (1) point/tally mark if answer is yes.

***If community has data on sheltered households available, it should use this data to shape the development of this assessment tool and add more questions as more information on sheltered households becomes available. In every case that the household being assessed matches a sheltered household, one point should be added (e.g., if most households entering shelter are exiting jail or prison, and the household being assessed is exiting jail or prison, they should receive one additional point). The total points needed to be eligible for prevention should be adjusted accordingly as additional questions are added to this tool. Some examples of questions to be added:

- Prior living situation matches most common prior living situation of sheltered households (look at response to question two)
- Trigger of housing crisis matches most common housing crisis for sheltered households (look at response to question three)
- Household composition matches that of sheltered households (singles vs. families, age of head of household, number of children, etc.)

Total Prevention Points: _____

Provide prevention assistance if household has at least three points (remember to adjust the number of points necessary if adding additional questions).

Concluding Questions – Case Manager Only

1. Does client qualify for diversion assistance?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, attempt to make appropriate referrals to other available community/mainstream resources.

2. If so, what kind of assistance do they need initially to be successfully diverted?

☐ Landlord mediation

☐ Conflict resolution with potential roommate

☐ Rental assistance (Amount _____)

☐ Utility assistance (Amount _____)

☐ Other financial assistance (Amount _____)

☐ Other assistance (Define: _____)

3. Does client qualify for prevention assistance?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, attempt to make appropriate referrals to other available community/mainstream resources.

4. If so, what kind of assistance do they need initially to be successfully diverted?

☐ Landlord mediation

☐ Conflict resolution with potential roommate

☐ Rental assistance (Amount _____)

☐ Utility assistance (Amount _____)

☐ Other financial assistance (Amount _____)

☐ Other assistance (Define: _____)

This concludes the assessment.

See next page for the follow-up form.

Follow-Up Form (Case Manager/Assessment Staff Only)

1. Was the household diverted from entering shelter? (If no, skip to question two).

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, to where:

☐ Friend's house

☐ Family member's housing

☐ Previous housing

☐ Other (please describe): _____

How long were they in this housing? Number of days: _____

2. Did the household receive prevention assistance?

☐ Yes ☐ No

What type?

☐ Utility assistance in the amount of \$_____

☐ Rental assistance in the amount of \$_____

☐ Security deposit in the amount of \$_____

☐ Moving costs in the amount of \$_____

☐ Other \$_____

After 30 Days...

1. Did they find permanent housing?

☐ Yes ☐ No

After 90 Days...

1. Have they come back to shelter/the homeless assistance system since being diverted?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2. Are there whereabouts known?

☐ Yes ☐ No

3. If they are known, where do they live currently?

☐ Remained in initial housing

☐ Relocated to different permanent housing unit

☐ In homeless assistance system

4. If they “remained in initial housing” or “relocated to different permanent housing unit,” how long have they been there? Number of Days: _____